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DOG
MINERALS PROGRAM
FILE COPY

September 24, 1991

TO: Minerals File

FROM: Holland Shepherd, Senior Reclamation Specialist *HWG*

RE: Final Site Inspection, Hillside Complex, Bears Ears and Gizmo,
M/037/015, San Juan County, Utah

Date of Inspection: September 24, 1991

Time of Inspection: 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Conditions: Sunny, warm

Participants: Tony Gallegos, and Holland Shepherd, DOGM

Purpose: This inspection was conducted to evaluate the Hillside Complex minesites for complete reclamation bond release.

These sites were reclaimed in 1989 by Energy Fuels. The operator has requested that the Division evaluate these sites for complete bond release.

Gizmo

Our first visit was made to the Gizmo mine site. The Gizmo is located down the canyon and on the other side of the ridge from Fry Canyon and the Hillside and the Bears Ears mines. A long road is used to access the Gizmo site, about 3/4 mile in length. The road has been reclaimed in its entirety. The operator has deep ripped the road, constructed water bars and rock berms. Access is prevented because of the very, very rough nature of the road and now the heavy erosion that has impacted the road.

The Gizmo site itself, which was well contoured and deep ripped and seeded three years ago has been impacted by a substantial amount of rainfall evidenced by the large erosion gullies found on the reclaimed site. Even at this, revegetation has occurred on portions of the site and plant growth is evident. The type of vegetation

found on the site is predominately weedy, consisting of halogeton and Russian thistle; however, some plants that had been seeded on the site can be found growing there; crested wheatgrass, indian ricegrass, tall wheatgrass, saltbush, etc. It is felt that the operator could probably do very little more to enhance the revegetation establishment on this site. It would be possible to go back and broadcast seed again, but the success derived from this would probably not be worth the expense to the operator. It is felt by the Division at this time, that the revegetation and reclamation is adequate to allow for complete bond release. However, the BLM should be notified of the pending release of this site and be given an opportunity to comment on the reclamation success before release is made.

Bears Ears

Our next visit was made to the Bears Ears mine site, another one of the three mines that composes the Hillside Complex of mines. Reclamation involved the access road which is about 1/4 mile in length and a very small pad area. It is unknown whether it is was ever used for mining or not, but was reclaimed by Energy Fuels. Energy Fuels deep ripped the access road and pad, established berms, and reseeded. Both the pad and the road have now established an adequate cover of vegetation and it is not thought that any further reclamation efforts need to be taken at this site.

Hillside Complex

The next site that we visited was the actual Hillside mine. The mine consists of an access road that is again, about 1/4 mile in length and a staging area, and what was a large portal and a very large waste dump that extends over the side of the hill about 200 feet. Energy Fuels, using a track mounted backhoe, reclaimed the pad area and the road, recontouring very well and seeding as they went along. The mine portal area was completely backfilled and sealed off. The area was then broadcast seeded.

We found that the portions of the site that did not contain much mine waste were revegetating extremely well. Some large plants that had obviously been seeded on to the reclaimed area were beginning to establish in abundance. However, right around the portal area there was very sparse seeded plant growth. In fact, the majority of plants consisted of halogeton. This material found around the portal is very poor quality soil, having originated from inside the mountain consisting of shale and

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clay, probably coming from the chinle formation, high in salts and very, very water demanding.

Also, in the area where the portal had been, someone had excavated a small hole which allowed them to enter the old portal. The hole was just large enough to allow a person to crawl through it. Tony and I sealed up the hole again the best we could, with some debris and rocks found in the area. However, it is felt that the Division should ask the operator to go back in and seal up the hole again, as a final measure of reclamation. Also, perhaps post a sign on the area where the portal is located warning people to stay away from the area. Other than this, it is felt that no further reclamation efforts be made at this site.

jb

cc: Roger Smith, Energy Fuels
Ted McDougal, BLM
Wayne Hedberg, DOGM